

COMMENDING OSHA, REGION 5
AND THE OHIO VALLEY CHAPTER
OF ASSOCIATED BUILDERS
AND CONTRACTORS

HON. JOHN A. BOEHNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 29, 2000

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, as we move into the 21st century it is crucial for us to re-examine our work place laws to enhance co-operation between Federal and State regulators and employers and employees. For our economy to remain strong in the global marketplace we must encourage this participation between Federal regulators and employers and employees to ensure compliance and understanding of safety and health standards.

I want to commend the foresight of the region 5, Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the Ohio Valley Chapter of Associated Builders and Contractors to form a partnership that recognizes the importance of safe and healthful work environments for the construction industry. Their cooperation is a model for promoting the shared strategies and objectives. Accordingly, I submit the Partnering Charter to be placed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

PARTNERING CHARTER BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION, REGION 5, CINCINNATI AREA OFFICE AND THE ASSOCIATED BUILDERS AND CONTRACTORS, INC., OHIO VALLEY CHAPTER

The United States Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc., Ohio Valley Chapter (ABC) mutually recognize the importance of providing a safe and healthful work environment for the Nation's construction workforce. To advance our mutual goal, we strongly agree on the need to develop a working relationship that fosters mutual trust and respect for each organization's respective role in the construction safety process. We recognize and embrace the responsibilities inherent in those roles. We are committed to work as partners to achieve construction workplace safety through the following shared strategies and objectives:

1. Implement continuing and open communication policy between OSHA and ABC at all area, regional, chapter and national levels, in a manner that encourages respect and understanding.

2. Share knowledge of the best industry technology, innovations and work practices that improve jobsite safety and health performance.

3. Cooperate in the development and continuous improvement of safety training programs for the construction industry and OSHA personnel.

4. Promote recognition for construction safety excellence throughout the industry at every opportunity.

5. Ensure that enforcement policies and practices are effective, consistent and fair.

6. Promote principles of good faith and fair dealings as the foundation of our relationships.

7. Recognize and honor the Safety Partnership STEP Platinum Incentive Program for a period of three years.

8. Recognize that either party to the partnership may withdraw from the agreement at any time after submitting written notification of intent to the other partner.

Agreed this day, February 11, 2000: Michael G. Connors, Regional Administrator, U.S.

Department of Labor OSHA, Region V, Chicago; William M. Murphy, Area Director, U.S. Department of Labor OSHA, Cincinnati Area Office; Kathleen L. Somers, CAE, Executive Director, Associated Builders & Contractors, Inc., Ohio Valley Chapter; Dennis Nutley, President, Associated Builders & Contractors, Inc., Ohio Valley Chapter.

FREEDOM FROM UNFAIR ENERGY
LEVY ACT

HON. F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, JR.

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 29, 2000

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation, the Freedom from Unfair Energy Levy Act or "FUEL Act," to alleviate the impact of current high fuel prices. My legislation would place a six-month moratorium on federal motor fuel excise taxes, including the 18.3 cent per gallon tax consumers pay for gasoline and the 24.3 cent per gallon tax on diesel fuel, and eliminate permanently the 4.3 cents per gallon tax increase approved in 1993.

The need for this legislation is evident. Crude oil prices have more than doubled in the past 12 months, resulting in the largest gas price increase in history. In 1993, when fuel prices were low, Democrats in Congress, President Clinton, and a tie-breaking vote by Vice President GORE combined to increase federal fuel taxes. Now that prices are high and consumers are feeling the pinch, shouldn't we reduce federal fuel taxes?

Some have argued that money from fuel taxes is more useful in Washington than in Americans' pockets, helping motorists afford the high price of gasoline. In reality, the economic damage caused by high fuel prices far outweighs any impact on federal spending that a six-month moratorium could cause. High fuel prices have the potential to bring our strong economy to a grinding halt. In the 1970s, when the retail price of gasoline doubled, the U.S. was hit with double digit inflation and unemployment rose to over eight percent. Oil prices dropped precipitously in the '80s and the U.S. economy greatly improved, but, with the crisis in the Persian Gulf in 1990 and 1991, retail prices of gasoline increased nearly 20 cents per gallon. Predictably, this price hike corresponded with a recession and a rise in unemployment to over seven percent. Congress must work to reduce fuel costs if similar economic dislocation is to be avoided.

This record-breaking increase in the cost of gasoline follows a string of misguided Clinton-Gore Administration energy policies. Besides supporting the 1993 increase in the gas tax, the Administration also locked up the cleanest burning coal in the lower 48 states, which could be used to meet America's heating and electricity needs, by designating massive amounts of land in Utah as a National Monument. Further, the Administration has done nothing to increase U.S. oil production. As a result of the Administration's policies, domestic oil production is at its lowest point since before World War II.

With the onset of rising oil prices, the Clinton Administration has had the opportunity to reconsider its energy policies. However, the Administration's response to the growing national problem of rising oil prices has been to

target aid to one region, the Northeast, and to only one group of people, those receiving federal energy subsidies for home heating oil. Other fuel users, including truckers, farmers, and family drivers, are realizing no benefits from the Administration's actions. In contrast, a moratorium on the collection of the federal fuel tax would provide immediate assistance to every American who now bears the burden of rising fuel costs.

The Fuel Act's six-month moratorium on transportation excise taxes and permanent elimination of the 4.3 cent increase will immediately help Americans weather the current oil price storm that is directly impacting their daily lives. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

RURAL BROADBAND
ENHANCEMENT ACT

HON. EARL POMEROY

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 29, 2000

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join Representative STUPAK today as an original cosponsor of the Rural Broadband Enhancement Act (RBEA). This legislation will ensure rural America not be by-passed as high speed Internet access spreads across the urban areas of our nation.

The Rural Broadband Enhancement Act will authorize \$3 billion in low-interest loans over the next five years to finance the construction of the needed broadband infrastructure in rural communities. These loans would be repayable over 30 years at two percent interest. The program would be administered through the Department of Agriculture's Rural Utility Service, and is considered company neutral and technology neutral, so that entities from regional Bells to rural cooperatives to cable or satellite companies would be able to serve these communities with the best suited technology. The Rural Broadband Enhancement Act is modeled on the Rural Electrification Act which helped light up America when it was enacted more than 60 years ago.

We are all well aware that the Internet is now more than just a source of entertainment. Today people use the Internet to access a variety of information, from how to buy a car to the latest trends in the stock market to researching job opportunities or accessing college applications. The Internet is virtually limitless in the variety of information available, and for rural communities, broadband capability has the potential to provide an unprecedented opportunity to overcome the traditional geographic disadvantages.

Access to advanced telecommunications services will be an important component to further economic development opportunities in rural America. High-speed Internet is rapidly transforming every facet of business and industry. Economic opportunities will migrate to those areas of the country that can provide the necessary infrastructure to host them. We must make a strong federal commitment to support the deployment of advanced telecommunications services. Only with adequate support will we be able to stimulate facility investment necessary to deploy advanced services throughout rural areas. We must not let the digital divide isolate our rural communities.

I look forward to working with Representative STUPAK and my other colleagues to help pass this legislation.

HONORING EDWARD R. CASSANO

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 29, 2000

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Lieutenant Commander Edward R. Cassano, who has served as Manager of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary for the last four years.

Ed will be stepping down from his post at the Sanctuary next week, but he will not be leaving his passion for the ocean. Ed will assume the role of Executive Director at the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum.

Ed's commitment to our oceans and coastal resources is second to none. Throughout his tenure as Sanctuary Manager, Ed has led efforts to broaden the role and increase awareness of the National Marine Sanctuary Program and it is for this reason that I have been proud to support our Sanctuary Program here in the House.

One of the things Ed is best known for is his ability to bring people together and create partnerships. For example: the Marine Educators' Regional Alliance represents over 30 organizations concerned with marine education; the Research Activity Panel representing over 25 marine institutions that join together to identify research needs in the Sanctuary; and the Sanctuary Advisory Council which brings together community organization and local, state, and Federal agencies to ensure public input for the Sanctuary Program. All of these were formed under Ed's leadership.

Mr. Speaker, last month the California Coastal Commission passed a Resolution honoring Ed for his dedication and outstanding contribution to the State of California and the National Marine Sanctuary Program. This Resolution states that Ed's work is a proud legacy that has significantly improved the quality of life for the people of California and the Nation. I couldn't agree more and I am truly honored to be Ed's Representative in Congress, and more importantly, his friend. I know that his leadership on marine and coastal issues will continue.

THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

HON. PHIL ENGLISH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 29, 2000

Mr. ENGLISH. Mr. Speaker, next month, I will have the privilege of visiting the Republic of Kazakhstan to witness firsthand this vigorous young nation's emergence, under the leadership of its President Nursultan Nazarbayev, as a bastion of democracy and free market economy in Central Asia. I am entering into the RECORD three articles written last week by Scott Hogenson, Executive Editor of the Conservative News Service (CNS), who just returned from Kazakhstan. Mr. Hogenson spent time in Kazakhstan reporting on that na-

tion's rich ethnic and cultural diversity, its free media, and its strategic importance to the United States.

At a time when we are paying upwards of \$2.00 for a gallon of gasoline, Kazakhstan is a viable source of hope for us. This non-OPEC member is rapidly developing its enormous oil and natural gas reserves with the help of Mobil, Chevron, and other U.S. corporations. As reported by Mr. Hogenson, Kazakhstan is an ally of the U.S. and a secular Moslem nation that has befriended Israel and stood up against Islamist terrorists.

Please take the time to read these fascinating articles and join me in saluting Kazakhstan's struggle to right itself after 70 years of brutal Soviet repression.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY REFLECTS GAINS IN
KAZAKHSTANI DEMOCRACY
(By Scott Hogenson)

ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN (CNSNews.com).—Ivan Bernardovich Zinkevich describes Kazakhstan's transformation from communism to democracy as one that resulted in his Polish heritage being "reborn."

The re-birth of ethnic and cultural identity among Kazakhstan's minority populations was demonstrated in no small part Sunday afternoon when a crowd of about 100 ethnic Poles rose to their feet as a nine-member youth choir sang the Polish national anthem during a cultural celebration in Almaty, an act that would have been considered criminal a few decades ago.

Zinkevich, the 60-year old chairman of Almaty's Polish Cultural Center, called this and other public displays of cultural heritage a "very significant" freedom for Kazakhstanis, who have been laboring to make democracy work since the nation declared its independence from the former Soviet Union in 1991.

While the vast majority of Kazakhstan's 15.6 million residents are either Kazakh or Russian, people representing more than 100 other ethnic groups also live in this sparsely populated central Asian nation whose geography makes it the ninth largest country on Earth.

But Zinkevich made it clear that he and the estimated 47,000 ethnic Poles living here do not want to be separate from the rest of the nation. Speaking through a translator, Zinkevich said Poles "want to be Kazakhstanis but also want ethnic identity," within Kazakhstan.

Born in Kazakhstan in 1940, Zinkevich is the son of Polish parents who, like millions of other non-Russians, were deported to this region of the former USSR in 1936 under the dictatorship of Joseph Stalin. More than half a century later, the mass deportation of people to Kazakhstan has resulted in a population that is among the most diverse in the world.

While many of the new nations created from the demise of the Soviet Union have struggled with varying degrees of ethnic strife, Zinkevich said there are "no conflicts," among Kazakhstan's ethnic peoples, a view shared by the leader of the country's National Democratic Party.

Hasen Kozha-Ahmet, who heads one of the numerous opposition parties to President Nursultan Nazarbayev, described the country's indigenous Kazakh population as "very tolerant," though he said through a translator that there is a "distrust of some ethnic Russians among some of the nation's Kazakhs, who comprise roughly 52 percent of Kazakhstan's citizens. Russians are the second largest ethnic group in the country, representing about 31 percent of the population.

A staunch Kazakh nationalist and anti-Communist, Kozha-Ahmet attributed some

of the distrust he described to "the humiliation of the Kazakh people," under Soviet rule. But Kozha-Ahmet said he is generally pleased and optimistic about continued harmony between the many ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan.

Although general tolerance among the various peoples plays a large part in keeping Kazakhstan essentially free of ethnic strife, the growth of free-market economies also plays a part in maintaining social and political stability.

Sergy A. Tereschenko, chairman of the majority Otan Party that supports Nazarbayev's administration, said continued emphasis on economic reforms and creating stronger markets are not only key elements of the party's platform, but also represent "the most difficult issue," for his party and the nation.

"If a majority (of citizens) does not have work, they express dissatisfaction," said Tereschenko, a former communist who assumed leadership of the Otan Party after serving as Nazarbayev's first prime minister.

Speaking through a translator, Tereschenko likened the "establishment of a middle-class," in Kazakhstan to the Biblical account of the Jews' 40-year sojourn through the desert.

"It is very difficult to show benefits to capitalism," said Tereschenko, an agricultural businessman who said he repudiated the economic precepts of communism after studying and learning the business structures of the United States and other democracies during the course of his travels abroad.

The economic challenges facing the people of Kazakhstan and their associated political challenges for the Otan Party are not small. With a population that is shrinking due to emigration by some from Kazakhstan and the continuing recovery from the nation's economic contraction following its independence from the old USSR, Tereschenko emphasized the importance of writing legislation and policies "that are clear to the people."

"To accept law is one thing. To explain it is another," said Tereschenko, who added that a primary need for the Otan Party is to "prove the value (of democracy) by demonstration." The Otan Party holds 32 seats in the 77-member Majilis, or lower chamber of Kazakhstan's Parliament. By comparison, Kazakhstan's Communist Party holds four seats in the Majilis.

In attempting to overcome the difficulties of throwing off communism and introducing the relatively unknown precepts of free-market economic policies to a people who have enjoyed little freedom for the past two centuries, Nazarbayev had issued a sweeping package of proposed long-term reforms known as the "Kazakhstan 2030" plan.

Nazarbayev's proposals address a wide range of needs and goals for the nation, covering national security and domestic stability, management of the country's large oil and mineral reserves, the development of a professional class of government employees, education, health care and other social issues, increased economic growth through open markets, and improving the country's communications and transportation infrastructure.

In delivering his Kazakhstan 2030 proposals, Nazarbayev spoke to all citizens in asking the country to "share my vision for the future of our society and the mission of our state," but there also is a strong emphasis on the younger generation of Kazakhstanis and the need to "say once and for all what future we want to build for us and our children."

The long view of Kazakhstan 2030 is reflected in part by Nazarbayev's recognition